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(Concluded from page 34).

On pp. 17 ff. Professor Postgate argues earnestly that this drifting, this ceaseless change of language has a most serious bearing on the value of *translations*—these substitutes which we are asked to accept in lieu of the originals. Translation is the servant of literature, and fidelity, its single merit, is the virtue of a drudge. How imperfectly even this merit is forthcoming, I think everyone is aware. The best of translations are from the first but poor and inadequate reproductions, and from the hour of their making they steadily decline. As the words employed in them change their meaning and pass out of currency, they become first inadequate, next misleading, and at the last unintelligible. And then the translation may be said, without prejudice to truth, to consist of *dead language*. The words, indeed, are there, but their soul, the sense of which they were the chosen vehicles, has departed; or worse, maybe, in the dead frame has been generated alien and usurping life, the corrupter and the poisoner of intelligence.

Here we have an argument against translations of the Classics even more novel and effective than that recently advocated by Professor Yeames (*THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4.161).

As an example of a translation in such dead language Mr. Postgate instances the Authorized Version of the Bible, characterizing it in language the reverse of that commonly applied to it; some of it will bear quoting in full (18):

It has now become in many and often most important passages, both in letter and spirit, little better than a falsification of the original. Let me take one of a sheaf of instances. In earlier English *ghost* was used, like the German *Geist*, in the senses of *breath* and *spirit*. The Authorized Version's phrase, 'He gave up the ghost', is still intelligible to many of its readers; yet it misrepresents the original, nevertheless, since it is now a strange and antiquated expression for the simple idea of 'expiring' or 'breathing one's last'. But the phrase 'Holy Ghost', for which the American members of the Revising Committee most rightly substituted 'Holy Spirit' throughout, conveys nothing to the uninstructed reader but what is either unmeaning or grotesque. And yet every week, from hundreds and thousands of pulpits and platforms, this version is still read and—save the mark!—expounded, without a word about its true character or the pitfalls with which it abounds.

I am reminded of the German Exchange Professor who would talk of the 'College Ghost' when he meant to exhort to college spirit.

Akin to the evil of these continuous 'translations' is another, according to Professor Postgate (19),

namely, the damage wrought by the dead renderings of individual words so common in our Latin Dictionaries. This leads him to ride one of his hobbies—the harm done by the "all but ineradicable belief that the English words derived from Latin are in very truth the same as the Latin ones" (19). In our country, at least, warning against such a belief is sounded often enough, at least by good teachers.

Why should we read the Classics at all (20)? In answering this question Mr. Postgate points out that in many respects modern life is not much, if at all, in advance of ancient life: by consequence the things of which the ancients wrote are not foreign to the interests and experiences of the moderns (21-22). This leads him to dwell on the debt of the modern world to Rome—in law, in medicine, in theology, nay, even in science; even now Rome has abundant power to instruct, if we would but hear.

Who that thinks for a moment can doubt that all along the road of Roman history lie lessons for us? A nation of landmen, driven by political and geographical causes to grasp at the sceptre of the seas, pitting itself against the greatest maritime power of the ancient world, against a race of merchants and mariners for many centuries, and, in spite of the efforts of the greatest military genius that history has known, emerging victorious from the terrible conflict by the force of a consummate organization, an unflinching patriotism, and an iron self-discipline; a fair and fertile peninsula denuded of its cultivation and drained of its population through the unchecked working of economic laws; a commonwealth passing through social to political disintegration with an aristocracy frivolous and luxurious, a proletariat indolent and unfit, amid a vanishing middle class; a great capital filled with aliens from every part of the globe, whose mob of pauperized sightseers was, as a rule, content to eat the bread and view the sports which its Government thought it a politic charity to bestow, but which rose in dangerous and deadly disorder when, through stress of weather or war, the cornships of Africa and Egypt failed to bring the foreign food; a class of financiers whose operations disturbed the peace of the world, as when, for example, a millionaire of the Empire provoked a rising in Britain by suddenly calling in his loans; a provincial administration which solved the problem of governing an empire over subject races without laxity and without discontent; and, lastly, the end of all, when the vast civilization, with its elaborate organization of law and order, its spacious and well-kept cities, its network of international highways and channels of

communication, was shivered to pieces by hordes of merely virile and valiant barbarians, because it had done nothing to counteract the sapping and disabling power of perpetual peace, because it preferred comfort to duty, and delegated the burden of defence. These things may a man read in the annals of Rome—"in illustri posita monumento", as its historian says—in works as far removed from the terminological inexactitudes of current politicians and the phrases, as empty as they are resonant, which call their followers to heel, as the pole-star is set above the fog, the smoke and turmoil of our Northern towns.

The author then points out (23) that after all the claims of Rome and Rome's language "do not rest in the first degree upon their antiquarian, historical, or linguistic importance . . . <but> much more upon <Latin> literature". He then cites, in translation, Livy's account of the fall of Alba Longa (1.29) and Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 1.421 ff., with the following comment (25):

Such literature surely is not dead; it is for all times surely real and alive. Because it deals, not with what is transitory, superficial, or material, but with what is permanent, essential, and spiritual; because it deals with that universal humanity which neither custom nor fashion, nor soi-disant progress can ever change, the same on the Tiber as on the Thames, the same whether those who for the moment embody it are carried in litters or conveyed in taxicabs or, it may be, on aeroplanes. Should we not say that our Scottish friends showed their insight when they named professorships of Latin professorships of 'Humanity'?

Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show the importance and interest of Professor Postgate's paper. In style the address is often curiously rough and unpolished, being far short of the excellence we expect in this domain from English scholars or from those whose primary task in life is the study of the language and literature of Greece and Rome.

C. K.

PREPARATORY CLASSICS¹

It is not my purpose to enter upon a tirade against the teaching of the Classics in the secondary schools, for I believe that they are as well taught as any of the subjects studied there. But I would like to consider the matter for a short time with you in order to see if we are doing the best that can be done, and to ask whether we can better the work in any directions.

The colleges, of course, receive pupils from many different schools, of all grades of goodness and badness. Pupils from the same class in any school differ in their ability and power of application so that it is a composite photograph of the results of previous instruction which we receive in the colleges. We must therefore look at the matter in a broad spirit and draw our inferences from the general results.

¹ This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, at Princeton University, April 21, 1911.

If there is any general statement which might be said to cover all the cases which come under the observation of college teachers it is this, that the students who come to us lack *exact* knowledge of the classic languages. Now this statement is true not only with respect to students of the Classics, but also of students in all the branches which are required for entrance to college. That this is true anyone can learn by talking with any teacher, and by reading articles in periodicals devoted to teaching and school management. These articles are not written in a muck-raking spirit; for our system of education is being attacked by teachers as well as by those outside of the profession. The lack of exact knowledge is due to many causes. We Americans do not like exactness. Our humor is exaggeration; we speak in hyperbole; our language is slang. We avoid the effort which is necessary to the attainment of exactness and do not like it in others. It seems so humdrum. Further, the management of our schools is handed over to persons who do not know what education is, who are not educated themselves, who have obtained their election to office by the votes of uneducated people, who have sought the office for political preferment. Politics therefore play a large part in all matters connected with school management. Another fault with our system of education is the interference of parents with the work of the schools. They do not hold the child strictly to his work, but find all sorts of excuses for him if he does not get on well. They allow him to have his own way, to evade the more difficult studies, to shirk his work, and even to drop out altogether if he finds that school is an uphill climb, not a toboggan slide. Still another cause of the poor product of our schools is our teachers. Our many normal schools are supposed to turn out each year many persons qualified to teach, but they do not in fact do so; indeed, I do not believe that beyond a certain point anyone can be taught how to teach. The tricks of the trade are few. It is knowledge of one's subject plus experience which will make a teacher, if one is ever to be a teacher; for I believe that in large measure teachers are born and not made. Moreover teaching is not yet a profession in this country. Very, very many persons teach but a short time; their experience is therefore limited, for they teach merely until they can go into some other occupation. They do not teach long enough to learn how to do it.

All that has been said so far is merely to clear the way for the subject immediately in hand; for surely one must sit down and take account of stock before he begins any undertaking.

I have said that at the end of his preparatory course the student lacks exact knowledge of the Classics, by which I mean, of course, the student of the composite photograph, not the *bright one*, the